In pursuance of the directions of the Government, all Organisations under the Ministry were instructed in August 2004, to launch the Special Recruitment Drive to fill-up the backlog direct recruitment vacancies for SCs and STs in their respective organisations. As a result of this drive, all organisations, which had backlog vacancies, have considerably reduced the number of backlog vacancies reserved for SCs/STs

(d) Vacancies in IGRUA are mostly of technical nature, like Pilots, Engineers, Ground Instructors, Aircraft Technicians etc. Efforts made in the past to attract ST candidates did not meet with desired results. IGRUA is striving hard to attract reserved category candidates to fill up the vacancies. Since attractive pay and fringe benefits are being offered elsewhere in the aviation sector. IGRUA does not seem to be preferential choice including for ST candidates.

Reduction in cost of AIR Travel

*456. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether private airlines now account for more than 60 per cent of domestic air traffic;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether low cost of private airlines, which are much cheaper than the Indian Airlines/Alliance Air, is the reason for their increase in domestic air traffic;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the steps proposed to be taken to reduce the cost of air travel of Indian Airlines/Alliance Air aircrafts;

(f) whether Indian Airlines/Alliance Air propose to introduce no-frills flights; and

(g) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In the year 2005, private airlines handled a market share of 69% as against 31% by Indian Airlines.

(c) and (d) The increase in the share of private airlines in domestic air traffic is primarily due to establishment of new airlines and large scale induction of capacity in the domestic sector. Some private airlines have also gained market share due to lower air fare.

(e) Indian Airlines (IA) constantly endeavours to bring down its cost of operations through stringent cost control/economy measures. Further, IA is acquiring 43 new aircrafts equipped with latest technology and fuel efficient engines that will help in reducing the expenditure on maintenance and fuel.

(f) and (g) Indian Airlines/Alliance Air have no plans to introduce any no-frills flights at present. Current efforts of IA are directed towards improving and augmenting services in the existing market segment.

Irrigation projects of Rajasthan, M.P. and Gujarat

*457. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government has received any proposals relating to irrigation projects from the State Governments of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details of the projects sanctioned alongwith funds allocated therefore, State-wise and project-wise; and

(c) if not, the details of such projects alongwith reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ): (a) to (c) During the last two years two irrigation projects (one major and one medium) from Rajasthan and one major irrigation project from Madhya Pradesh were received in Central Water Commission (CWC) for techno-economic appraisal. These projects are under various stages of appraisal in CWC. The details of these projects are at the Statement enclosed. *(See* below). No project was received from Gujarat during the last two years for techno-economic appraisal. No fresh proposal for central assistance under Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) has been received during the last two years from the States of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.